

MERCATOR.

From Saturday, October 10. to Tuesday, October 13. 1713.

THE last *MERCATOR* exposed some of the Frauds of our new SCHEME-MAKERS: But they have two never-failing Advantages, which stand them in stead at this time; (1)

A rude way of railing down every thing, which they cannot otherwise argue down; and by Noise, at once both to Please and Deceive. (2) A Party, who being possess'd for other Designs, are willing to be Deceived.

The Question of what Advantage the French Trade HAS BEEN to us, pinches them sorely; but the Question of what it WILL BE hereafter, terrifies them with the very Apprehension of it; and therefore they spin out the Disputes of what has been, to the greatest Length they can.

The *MERCATOR* ought and thinks still, six or seven hundred thousand Pounds a Year from France in Linen is such a ridiculous Assertion, that no thinking Man can receive it, considering how few sorts that Trade is confin'd to, what Quantities we have from other Parts, and what Quantities we make at home, and ever did, even when the French Linen was cheapest; but if it were six Millions, these poor deluded People are ready to swallow it, upon the Parole of those, who they Employ to deceive them.

But it is necessary to state one other Fraud in their NEW SCHEME, which tho' but small in their Eyes, who, as is said, are resolved to be cheated; is not so in the Opinion of those, who desire to see for themselves: this is what has been noticed already, the choosing out a particular Year for the drawing their SCHEME, immediately following seven Years Prohibition, that the peculiar Demand of that Year may sound big, and pass with their People for the ordinary Import of every Years Trade. This Cheat runs through their whole Conduct: And however the *MERCATOR* thinks they are a People, who are not to be affected with any Demonstrations, and that they will rather be Exposed than Convinced: yet, for the sake of others, he will throw away a few Words upon them, and let it Convince or Expose them, which they please: for one of the two must be, and the Cheat must be discounted too out of the Balance of the Trade.

To clear themselves of the Knavery of this, they tell us, we may take the Years together at a Medium, as the way to make a right Judgment; and this is the truest thing they have said, and the only Piece of Justice they have offer'd to do: and if they would stand by it when they have said it, we shall soon come to an Understanding of the Case, and they will be overthrown by their own Argument; wherefore the *MERCATOR* joins Issue with them upon it: In order to which, the Imports of a few Articles shall be enquired into for the next two Years, and let them take any other Years, which they please, if they do not think these proper, the Argument will be against them in any Years, take them where they will.

It ought to be a Maxim in the Search of the Value of a Trade That since any single Year may be objected against, as not circumstanced to make a right Judgment by, two or three Years may be taken, of which that extraordinary Year ought not to be one; the Medium of which ought to be the Test of the Trade.

The *MERCATOR* may allow, without any Damage to the Argument, that this or that Year, or several Years, may have an extraordinary Quantity of Goods Imported, such as may never happen again till the like Occasion of a Prohibition happens again; and it will be allowed, that such a Year ought not to be taken as a Rule

of the Trade, or to make an Estimate of the Importations by: They, who will not allow this, will allow nothing that is just.

Applying this then to the Year 1685, they can shew no Year, before or since, which has an equal Quantity of Lockrams and Dowlas Imported; or let them take them one Year with another, it is believed they cannot make it appear, that the Importations have ever come up to the Quantity by above 20,000 Pieces; so that 20,000 Pieces less than are charged here, ought to be esteem'd the constant Import of the Trade. For Example:

Ann. 1685-6 Lockrams and Dowlas 68,878,614 ps.
The Importations of Lockrams and Dowlas for the next two Years, were thus:

1686-7 Imported Pieces 52,245 $\frac{1}{2}$

1687-8 Imported Pieces 41,050

93,295

The Medium of the two Years is 46,647 $\frac{1}{2}$

Which is less than the Year 1685-6 22,231 $\frac{1}{2}$

These Pieces rated at 5l. per Piece } amounts to 111,155 : 2 : 6

The Pruens are a farther Testimony of this, tho' the Value is not so considerable. The Pruens having been seven Years prohibited, large Commissions were immediately given by our Merchants upon opening the Trade; so that the Importations for the first Year appear extravagant (viz.)

1685-6. Pruens 47,005 C. $\frac{1}{2}$ at 15 s. is 35,304 : 2 : 6

1686-7. Pruens — 26,338 C. $\frac{1}{2}$

1687-8. Pruens — 16,759 C. $\frac{1}{2}$

42,098

The Medium of this for two Years is 21,049.

Difference 25,956 $\frac{1}{2}$ at 15 s. is 19,367 : 7 : 6

Next to this, the Salt is an unanswerable Objection, and makes out what we say of this Fraud beyond all Probability of Reply. Let them shew any one Year since the Prohibitions, or since the former War in 1666, when England Imported 16,000 Wey of French Salt in a Year, the Year 1685 excepted, the Challenge will lie in all the Particulars, but in the Salt especially. The Importations were generally five or six thousand Wey of Salt in a Year, and a great Quantity too: For Example,

1685-6. Salt 16,713 Wey at 2l. per Wey is 33,426 l.

1686-7. Salt 7,907 Wey.

1687-8. Salt 5,971 Wey.

13,878

The Medium of this for two Years is 6,939 W. at 2l. is 13,878

Difference is 977 W. at 2l. is 19,648

There can lie no Objection to these Discounts, unless they can shew any other Year, in which was Imported such Quantities of these Goods as in this particular Year, (viz.)

68,878 Pieces of Dowlas.

47,005 C. weight of Pruens.

16,713 Wey of Salt.

On the other Hand, this Objection will not lie against the English Woollen Manufactures Exported, but just the contrary, our Manufacture being always balk'd by Prohibitions; and this also is manifest in this



this very Year of 1685, for that till our Manufacture had begun to spread it self, the Quantity did not Encrease, they having been supplied by the Encouragement given to their own, and a Seven Years Disuse of ours.

But having once made their way, they Encreased after the first Year, and above Sixty thousand Pounds worth of English Woollen Manufactures were Exported into France in 1686, more than in 1685, while all the Imports from thence, Wine and Brandy excepted, Decreased and Declin'd: This the Custom-House Books make appear.

Nor would it have stopped there, but the French King finding the English Goods grow upon the French Trade, and Encrease Daily, he laid double Duties upon them the next Year, (viz.) 1687, which put a Check to the Trade indeed; and perhaps then indeed they might Over-balance us, but not otherwise, for the high Duties necessarily lessened the Quantity in those Days, tho' it seems our People will not allow, that it shall be so on our Side NOW.

If the *MERCATOR* was to go on with this Head, it would fairly Discount from their blustering Account above 30,000 Pound more, which he is ready to prove at any time.

These Things sufficiently shew the Frauds of these People, in fixing upon the Year next immediately after a Prohibition of Commerce: if this is a fair Method, then the *MERCATOR* might also pick out like Years of Advantage, and go back to 1668, when the Lead Exported to France in one Year amounted to 21,757 Fodder, and something more, which at 12 l. per Fodder, is 261,084 Pounds; whereas the usual Quantity is above Three thousand Fodder, more or less: Now if it be just to Reckon, as they do, the Importations of an extraordinary Year as a Rule for the rest, it is as just to Reckon 21,757 Fodder of Lead to be the ordinary Annual Export of Lead to France, which would be Ridiculous, and so is 68,000 Pieces of Lockrams, &c.

Many such Advantages as these it is apparent they have made out of this Contrivance; but these shall serve for present Observation.

The next Cheat of these Scheme-Makers, is the Value of Goods, which they take upon them to state according to their Arbitrary Pleasure: For Example,

French Ghentings, at 50 s. per Piece, these are well known in the Drapers Shops to be not worth above 6 s. to 7 s. and 10 or 12 s. sold by Retail, one with another.

In the Accounts of the Custom-House, laid before the House of Commons, for the Year 1687, we have the following Entry from France:

Ghentings 4,956 Pieces, at 1,475 l. 7 s. 3 d. which is 5 s. 10 d. per Piece.

Yet of these they Charge 2,320 Pieces at 1 l. 10 s. per Piece; here they Gain by a Cheat 2,803 l. 7 s.

The Wine and Brandy are already mentioned, they are Charged at 17 l. 10 s. per Ton the Wine, and 20 l. the Brandy.

The *MERCATOR* may in vain Challenge these Men to bring their Authorities to prove this: It is known by Hundreds of Merchants, nay, to all Europe, that in those Years before the late Wars, the Wines in France were ordinarily sold there from 6 l. to 10 l. per Ton, as well under as over, and that as it is in all such Cases, the Quantity of the lowest Price far exceeded the Quality of the highest, so that 8 l. per Ton was more than a Medium for the Price; and that as it is the highest Arrogance in the World to Argue against Matter of Fact, so those that do are Calmly desired to bring their Authority to prove it was otherwise: In the mean time the *MERCATOR* shews them an Authority for his Opinion, besides his Experience of the Fact, from the Inspector-General of the Customs, who in his Report to the Commissioners of Accounts, affirms the same Thing, and Appeals to all the experienced Merchants in London for the Truth of it, as the *MERCATOR* does also. The Inspector-General's Words are these:

"In stating the Ballance between Two Countries, the prime Cost only in the said respective Countries should be Calculated.

"Now 'tis Notorious the prime Cost of Wine was about 8 l. per Ton, and of Brandy about 9 l. per Ton; in which Valuations I appeal to all the old experienced Merchants, who formerly dealt to France.

What Pretence, but the designed Fraud spoken of already, these Men can have to set down the Wine at 17 l. 10 s. and the Brandy at 20 l. is hard to imagine; and till they discover it, this must be Discounted from their Scheme also, the Difference whereof in this Scheme, Amounts to 181,928 Pounds.

The Paper is of the same kind, which they Rate at 5 s. per Rheam for ordinary Crown and Copy Paper, which it is known Cost in France from 2 s. 10 d. to 2 s. 6 d. and 3 s. per Rheam, and no more; the Difference of which Amounts to in this fallacious Scheme 8,865 l.

The Wrought Silks are mentioned in the last *MERCATOR*, which at 10 s. per Pound Over-Charge, makes 60,748 l. 10 s. of which hereafter.

To come then directly to their Scheme, without examining for the present their lesser Frauds, which are many, we shall take it from themselves, and only Collect the Heads together, which have been already mentioned, and take the Cheats from their Sum Total, (viz.)

They make their Imports from France, including all their Exorbitances, to Amount to 1,284,419 l. 10 s. 3 d.

We Deduct in part of the Frauds committed in that Account, the following Sums:

For Lockrams and Dow-		
las, more than the usual	} 111,155: 2: 6	
Rate of Importation		
For ditto Pruens, at	} 19,367: 7: 6	
their own Price		
For Salt Imported more	} 19,648:	
than the ordinary		
Rate		
For Over-Rates in the Price of Goods,		
as has been before described,		
Wines	158,080:	
Brandy	23,848:	
Wrought Silks	60,748: 10:	
Paper	8,865:	
French Lawns	2,803:	



374,807:	374,867
	909,552
	19,648
	889,904

This is indeed but in part; and if so great a Sum stands Over-Charged in so few Articles, it may well be supposed, that all the rest of the Account will afford us a proportion of Over-Charge, which may be farther Exposed in its Order, for it is not likely the Fraud should all lie in seven or eight Particulars.

The *MERCATOR* therefore undertakes to reduce the Sum of their Imports for the Years past, by the like just Discounts, to less than Eight hundred thousand Pounds per Annum; and shall in its proper place give just Reasons for so doing: In the mean time our Exportations to France are to be considered in the next *MERCATOR*.

ERRATA in the Last.

Col. 4. Line 8. instead of 764,614 C. weight, it should have been 7,646 C. 1 qr. 4 lb.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Poll of the Livery-Men of the City of London, at the Election for Members of Parliament: Begun Monday, October the 9th, 1710. and ended the Saturday following. Shewing who each Person Poll'd for. The Names of those that did not Poll. Printed for John Morphew, near Stationers-Hall. Price 1 s.